ARMCHAIR THEATRE

"C A L L A N "

Format for a series

Specially written

by

JAMES MITCHELL

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CALLAN SERIES

O R I G I N S

James Mitchell wrote an Armchair Theatre called A MAGNUM FOR SCHNEIDER.

The series idea is a spin-off from this.

Ideally A MAGNUM FOR SCHNEIDER might be the first episode of the series.

We have six-months' option on the idea and story lines.

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AUTHOR

In 1965, Anthony Boucher, the critic of crime fiction for the New York Times, and perhaps the best informed critic in this field wrote:

> "The Hard-Bitten, cynical spy story which casts a spell through its deliberate lack of glamour (like The Confident Beauty who triumphs in her avoidance of make-up) has been particularly successful in this decade in the works of such authors as John Le Carre and Len Deighton, - and probably one should add the name of James Munro, whose THE MAN WHO SOLD DEATH is a model of this kind of restrained thriller - a tightly coiled plot with meshings and interweavings that are never quite predictable: A direct, unsimplified view of character."

In 1966, Boucher commented on Munro's new novel DIE RICH DIE HAPPY:-

> "His people are firmly created, his story never stops moving; his hero's toughness is genuine, and this, like THE MAN WHO SOLD DEATH is one of the truly satisfactory intrigue-thrillers."

Munro has had his books translated into eight languages: German, Swedish, Italian, Japanese, French, Norweigan, Danish and Finnish.

They have been serialised in Britain, America, Germany, South Africa and Sweden.

Corgi Books in Britain have sold a quarter of a million paperbacks of his first book.

Bantam Books in the U.S.A. are selling a million.

Both Houses plan to do the same with the second book next year.

James Munro's other name is James Mitchell.

I envisage that he would write at least the first three episodes.

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B A C K G R O U N D

Espionage is about people. Essentially, it is about one man, and the effect he has on others. He is a man alone: The nature of his trade isolates him from his kind. He can never hope for lasting human contacts: abiding love, enduring friendship. His weapons are treachery, corruption, betrayal, and yet he himself must be immune from these.

In the world of the spy, it is not only necessary, it is good, to corrupt to betray. So much is at stake that the spy can never hesitate. His enemy must be destroyed. By any means.

Inevitably then the innocent are involved, manipulated. Inevitably they are hurt: sometimes they are destroyed. They confront one man, and he defeats them, because there is no weapon he will not use for their defeat, and yet he himself is a good man. He destroys one to save thousands, pernaps millions. He plays God because he must. There is no other way.

This attitude of mind is true of every spy: and yet all spies are different, each an expert in his own field. The decoder, the chemist, the gambler, the soldier, the economist, the whore. Behind them all, is the most terrible, the most dangerous: the ultimate spy.

His weapons are theft, blackmail, murder. The tools of his trade are the knife, the gun, and an icy courage no other kind of man possesses. He is the destroyer.

Callan is such a man.

He has never been seen on television before.

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A I M

In this series we aim to create the acid authenticity of the gritty world of espionage: the feeling of fear for example, its sour smell, its taste of rusty steel. Often enough this is, unavoidably, a world of glamour: it has to be. The spy is concerned with power, and power, when it relaxes, looks for elegance, charm, comfort. Power insists that its wine be chateau-bottled and its women beautiful. But it is no part of the series to pretend that because a woman is beautiful she is less real than a plain one. Danger brings a reality all its own, for this is the world of escapes, assassinations, stolen secrets: a world half-nightmare, half fantasy to the ordinary man: but to the spy it is normal, commonplace. Above all, it is real.

The reality doesn't come from atomic fountain pens or poisoned wall-paper: it comes from people. And some of them are very ordinary people, caught up in extraordinary situations.

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CHARACTERS

CALLAN

Callan himself is ordinary in one way at least: if he walked past you in the street you would forget him at once: you would scarcely see him. His ordinariness is his protection. He is a highly skilled cracksman, a master of unarmed combat, a dead-shot with a pistol. A killer. But he looks so much like everybody else he is almost invisible. It is only when you know him well that you realise his strength, his menace - and his charm.

Callan is in his thirties. His background lower middleclass. He speaks fluently, but not academically, with the accent of his background. He is a witty man, but his wit is bitter, sardonic.

Throughout his career in espionage Callan worked with Hunter's Section a counter-espionage group with the highest security rating. Their business is getting rid of people who are dangerous to the state. Their weapons are bribery, blackmail, and violence: death if necessary. Every member of the section is in danger, all the time. If they are caught in a crime - and they commit many crimes - no one can help them. They are on their own.

At the start of the series Callan has left the section. In many ways he is its most brilliant operative, but Colonel Hunter, its Head, released him. Callan worries too much about people: even the enemy whom he must destroy. (See Magnum For Scheider)

Yet Hunter needs Callan, because of his brilliance, and Hunter is shrewd enough to realize that, if handled the right way, he can still be used. The trick is to exploit his concern for other human beings.

Callan is well-aware of this, but unable to prevent it. If a person can be helped, he must help them - and settle with Hunter later. Throughout the series there is a fierce antagonism between Hunter and Callan. Each unconsciously is striving to make the other man more like himself. Sometimes the antagonism is comic, sometimes it is deadly. It is always there.

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HUNTER

COLONEL HUNTER is a very cold fish indeed. If he weren't, he couldn't do his job, which is to plan the destruction of people dangerous to the state. The order is given - from where is never revealed - and Hunter sets up the job. He is a brilliant organiser of murder, and sleeps every night without pills.

He is in his 50's, with typical staff-officer background - Public School and Sandhurst. He rarely loses his temper, never shouts - and is completely terrifying; his skill at his job is so apparent. The one man who can make him angry is Callan - because sometimes - by no means always - Callan can outwit him.

Hunter's section is housed in a disused Edwardian school. It's cover-function is that of scrap-dealers, and the school is apparently used as a warehouse. Inside it are communications (short-wave radio), gym, pistol range and all the paraphernalia of espionage.

(N.B These are minimised in the stories)

Lorries and closed vans, as well as cars, can come and go freely. But the whole place is under constant watch by closed-circuit T.V.

The monitors are seen in Hunter's office.

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MERES

TOBY MERES is an operator in Hunter's section. In a sense he is the antithesis of Callan. Killing doesn't bother him; he enjoys it.

He is in his 20's, from a wealthy public-school background, and in dress, mannerisms and habits is a handsome Chelsea lay-about. He hates Callan, and would do anything to beat him.

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LONLEY

LONLEY is a small-time, very nervous little crook, who suffers badly from B.O. The section wouldn't look at him, but Callan - a free-lance - uses him because he can produce almost anything - from a gun to a forged passport, at very short notice. Because of his wide range of contacts, he can also produce the kind of specialist - card-sharps, pick-pockets etc., that Callan scmetimes needs. He is terrified of Callan and, for that reason only, loyal.

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STORYLINES

CALLAN SERIES

"THE DEATH OF ROBERT E. LEE"

Robert E. Lee is a man the American C.I.A. want very badly indeed. He is Chinese, educated in the U.S., who has defected back to Red China and has used his knowledge of the American way of life to betray and destroy U.S. troops in Vietnam.

The Americans know that Lee, like many Chinese, has a great love and respect for his father. They know also that Lee's father was last heard of in Hong Kong. Because of this, they approach British Security, and their Representive, Peters, is at last seen by Colonel Hunter. Peters offers a deal: Robert E. Lee in exchange for information about Russian Security techniques which Hunter badly needs. Whether Lee is delivered alive or dead is unimportant.

Hunter agrees, and sees a Chinese girl called Jenny (seen in 'Magnum for Schneider') an old enemy of Callan's. He tells her that Callan, who did security work in Hong Kong, knows where Lee's father is. Hunter is sure that Jenny, who has ways of contacting Red Chinese agents, will pass this fact on. He can then use Callan as bait.

Hunter is right, but two complications arise. One is that Jenny sees Callan on her own, and begins to like him, the other is that the C.I.A. man, Peters, discovers that Callan can reach Lee's father without the help of Hunter's Section. He therefore double-crosses Hunter, sees Callan on his own, and offers him money for the job of finding Lee - he would far sooner pay in money than in information.

Lee arrives in England. With Jenny's help Callan manages to meet Lee and avoid Hunter - and Peters. Lee holds Callan at gun-point and tells him that Chinese Security would only allow him to look for his father if he did a job while in England. The job is to kill Hunter. Callan must help him in this. He will be well paid. Callan agrees, and is given money, then deliberately sends Lee to Peters.

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In the struggle Peters, with Callan's help, kills Lee, and pays Callan, who then steals from him the information about Russian techniques that Hunter wants so badly. This he makes Hunter pay for through the nose. As Callan counts his money Hunter asks where Lee's father really is, and Callan tells him: In Kowloon Cemetery.

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CALLAN SERIES

'BUT HE'S A LORD, MR. CALLAN'

Beverly is an expert on every form of gambling - and cheating - who worked for Hunter's section until his obsession with gambling made him a risk. He has a grudge against Callan, who, he believes, once let him down so badly that he had to go to prison.
Beverly approaches Callan and asks his help in fleecing someone at cards, using a technique they both practised when they were with Hunter's section. Callan refuses.

Unknown to Callan, Hunter so contrives things that Callan is publicly and brutally insulted by Lord Borrowdale. Beverly then tells Callan that Borrowdale is the man he wants to cheat. Callan agrees to help.

They play cards with Borrowdale, who loses heavily. He invites Beverly and Callan to his house in the Border Country, where he is holding a shooting-party. There he can 'have his revenge' and win his money back.

Both men agree, but Callan, suspicious of Beverly, breaks into his flat, where he finds evidence that Borrowdale is a very nasty human being. He tells this to Lonely who is appalled; 'But he's a Lord Mr. Callan'.

Hunter is well aware of Borrowdale's nastiness. He has Borrowdale on a red file - which means that he is so dangerous that he must be dealt with by any means - including death. Borrowdale is in fact a connoisseur of corruption, a collector of dangerous secrets, which, if the price is right, he will sell.

At the present moment he has a hold on a young British diplomat called Fielding, who works in Washington, where he is a close friend of the President's son.
If the Russians knew of Fielding's past record they could seriously damage British-American relations - the President is a stern, hot-tempered man. Borrowdale is about to sell what he knows about Fielding to the Russians - and as a further hold on Fielding he keeps the beautiful young Mrs. Fielding with him.

At Borrowdale's house there are guests for the grouse-shooting. Borrowdale plays cards with Beverly and Callan - and faces ruin. The trick is that Beverly does the card cheating, but Callan is by far the bigger winner, with a pile of I.O.U's. Callan suspects that Hunter is mixed up in this situation, but can't prove it. Borrowdale bursts in on Callan and locks him in the gun-room, searching him for the I.O.U's. Callan denies knowing where they are - in fact Beverly has stolen them. Borrowdale threatens him with death if Callan won't hand over the I.O.U's - then leaves.

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Callan looks around a room full of weapons - shotguns.
But there is no ammunition. It is all locked up. From a barred window he sees Beverly and calls for help. At first Beverly refuses - Callan didn't help him when he was in trouble. At last he throws him one No.5 cartridge. Callan just manages to catch it and load the shotgun when Borrowdale comes back, armed. Callan kills him.
Callan gets Mrs. Fielding out of the way then calls the police. They are rather dubious about Callan's theory of a shooting accident. You mean it's murder? asks Callan. The police prefer manslaughter. It looks as if someone had been attacked by Borrowdale, then killed him. (That at least is the way Callan set the scene) But who would Borrowdale want to kill? Surely not old Beverly? says Callan. It's true that he won a lot of Borrowdale's money at cards. He's got a lot of his I.O.U's. But you can't suspect Beverly - the police think they can, go to look for him.
Callan sees that Hunter is the first to know....

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CALLAN SERIES

'GOODNESS BURNS TOO BRIGHT'

Bauer, free-lance German spy, has devised a scheme for planting an agent in a top-security Russian Ministry. To bring this off a decoy is needed - someone who will try to get into Russia, be discovered, and arrested. The Russians will then relax and the real spy be installed.
Bauer sells this scheme to Hunter's superiors in British Intelligence, and they pick Callan as decoy - he's perfect. The Russians have heard of him, he's a trained spy, and under interrogation would reveal himself as one - yet he has no recent dangerous knowledge.
Hunter resists this idea - after all Callan isn't in his Section now. He can't be ordered to go. But his superiors consider that Callan isn't just a perfect scape-goat, he's a nuisance to be got rid of. Hunter's orders stand. Hunter is told to get Callan to West Berlin. He rejects the idea of kidnapping Callan in England. Callan is too cautious and resourceful. Instead, he plays on his weakness - compassion. In West Berlin there is a Hungarian girl Callan knows called Eva - she has been involved in espionage since she escaped from Budapest as a girl. Hunter leaks to Callan the story his superiors told him, except that he lets drop that Eva is to be the victim. As Hunter expects, Callan at once sets off for West Berlin - to warn Eva.
In West Berlin he is kidnapped by Bauer. He at last escapes but his left wrist is broken in the process. Callan alone, knowing that Bauer's agents are hunting him, breaks into a doctor's flat.
The doctor is a lady of middle-age. They speak German at first, then she realises that, like her, he is English. She had lived in Germany with her husband - a German doctor - since the twenties. Her husband, like herself, was a liberal, concerned always to treat human beings honestly and decently, In Berlin's long agony after the war, she held on to this.
She treats Callan for his injury, and likes him. He is young enough to be her son....Then she says she must report his injury to the police, and Callan won't let her. He daren't risk being handed over to Bauer. He searches the flat and finds her husband's old army Luger, and two useable rounds of ammunition. She learns a little of his story, but feels the police should be told. He's bound to fall asleep soon, she warns him. She'll tell them then.

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Callan threatens to go to any lengths to stay awake - blackmail of a kind, as he senses that she would do anything, condone anything, rather than hurt a patient. In the end she begs him to sleep, and promises not to contact anyone until he wakes. Callan accepts her word. He wakes to the sound of voices. Bauer has traced him to the doctor's flat, and now is bullying the lady doctor as only an ex-Nazi can. Callan tries to escape. But the only way out is past Bauer - and the lady doctor. He goes into the room where they are. Bauer is armed and tries to kill Callan. Callan shoots him dead.

The woman is appalled. All she believes in, all she has fought for, in the very worst of times, is blasted by that shot. Why couldn't Callan simply have wounded him?

Callan tries to explain he is so conditioned that in that kind of situation, killing is all he knows. It won't answer. He tries to arrange so that no blame will fall on her, then calls Eva.

She arrives with Hunter. Callan anticipates another betrayal, but it isn't so. Hunter has come to tell him to go home. Callan created so much confusion in escaping from Bauer that the Russians are alerted and the operation is off.

So Callan can go, but the doctor, who has begun to need Callan as a son is needed, has still seen her hope destroyed.

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